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ABSTRACT

Designed to aid school personnel considering school choice as a possible desegregation method, this booklet explains the principles of controlled choice, presents an overall plan and flow chart, and reviews the types of organizations that might be developed. Controlled choice is a desegregation method that is voluntary, empowers parents and school staff, and leads to new and exciting reorganizations of school and curricula. Controlled choice makes all schools "magnets" for student enrollment, celebrates diversity, and acknowledges differences in learning styles. Although choice alone may increase the comfort level of parents, students, and staff and facilitate school improvement, only controlled choice will also lead to desegregation. Through a controlled choice system, three Massachusetts cities (Lowell, Fall River, and Cambridge) have increased the integration of their schools. Controlled choice has enormous potential for restructuring schools so that they are racially, ethnically, and sexually integrated, as well as high-quality, effective learning places. As this book shows, that potential can only be realized through an extensive, complex planning process involving all elements of the community. The planning process involves five phases: (1) Mechanisms for Initial Planning; (2) The Development of a City-Wide Plan; (3) Planning Individual Schools of Choice; (4) Implementation and (5) the First Year of Full Implementation. School administrators must make a major commitment to school organization and curriculum diversity and to school-based management. Five appendices present Massachusetts cities' plans and provide further information sources. A brief index is also provided. (MLH)

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# Planning for Schools of Choice:

## Achieving Equity and Excellence

Book II–Planning Guide

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# PLANNING FOR SCHOOLS OF CHOICE: ACHIEVING EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

## BOOK II: PLANNING GUIDE

by

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The NETWORK, Inc.
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## PREFACE

The New England Center for Equity Assistance, a project of The NETWORK, Inc., is pleased to publish Planning for Schools of Choice: Achieving Equity and Excellence, a series on controlled choice. The four books in the series are designed to aid school personnel who are considering controlled choice as a possible desegregation method. They will help educators to think about choice as a way of restructuring school systems and achieving desegregation, to learn how to develop a choice plan for their district, and to review the different kinds of school organizations that might be developed for schools in their district.

We are excited about controlled choice. It is a method of desegregation that is voluntary, empowers parents and school staff, and leads to new and exciting school organization and curriculum. It uses the best of the magnet schools concept by making all schools "magnets" for student enrollment. It celebrates and encompasses the diversity found in American schools. Choice acknowledges that since all children are not alike or learn in the same way, schools should also be different. Further, parents and students should be able to choose the school they think most suitable for each child.

Parents have long shown a desire to choose the type of school their children attend. The quality of schools is one of the criteria they have used in selecting a neighborhood. They have enrolled their children in private and parochial schools; they have supported various types of education in their own school districts. They have stood in long lines or camped overnight to enroll their children in magnet schools. Children have made choices, too. Many, after all, choose not to attend school at all; they drop out. Some choose to go to exam schools or private schools. On the other hand, some parents have never had the luxury of making choices about the schools their children can attend. Because of poverty, illiteracy, or discrimination, they have been forced to send their children to schools that often are underfunded and inadequate. Choice, then, can be a means to empower all parents.

Choice alone, however, will not lead to desegregation of a school district. While choice may increase the comfort level of parents, students, and staff and may lead to improved schools, only controlled choice will also lead to desegregation. Based on the limited experience available at this time, its potential as a desegregation method is great. Through use of a system of controlled choice, Lowell, Fall River and Cambridge, three cities in Massachusetts, have been able to increase the integration of their schools. In Cambridge, controlled choice has resulted in increased achievement levels of students from different schools. In Fall River and Lowell, a major change in the school environment is already evident, as is a significant increase in parental involvement, especially in educational issues.

Controlled choice, therefore, has enormous potential as a means of restructuring schools so that they are racially, ethnically, and sexually integrated, as well as high-quality, effective schools that the community, students, and school staff all can be proud of. That potential can only be realized, however, through an

extensive and complex planning process that involves all elements of the community. Also, the school administration must make a major commitment to diversity of school organization and curriculum and to school-based management of that organization and curriculum.

These books, we hope, will be helpful to those who are interested in controlled choice and desegregation. We welcome comments and discussion of this new school structure.

The author of this book is Evans Clinchy, senior field associate at the Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, MA. He has worked in the field of desegregation and public school choice for the past twenty years. He has assisted the communities of Indianapolis (IN), Chicago (IL), Stamford (CT), and the Massachusetts communities of Lowell, Worcester, and Fall River to develop desegregation remedies based upon parent and professional choice. He is a contributing editor of Equity and Choice, and has contributed major articles on choice to Phi Delta Kappan and other educational publications.

# I

# OVERALL PLAN FOR CHOICE: EARLY STAGES

*"Choice is a value per se in our society: to extend choice is to open new options -- to broaden freedom and possibility. And that is a benefit in and of itself. It is a particular benefit to those who have been unhappy with the pre-choice situation, but it is a boon even to those who have not. Choice means instant empowerment for those who receive it, and it significantly alters the relation of chooser and chosen."*
-- Dr. Mary Anne Raywid, Professor of Education, Hofstra University, in "Success Dynamics of Public Schools of Choice," 1986.

Pre-Planning Stages: Exploring the Possibility of Choice

The successful planning of a choice system requires a step-by-step planning process that enlists the parents, professionals, and community in the educational process so that everyone becomes more knowledgeable about what choice can mean. Although no Massachusetts community has precisely followed the method approach described in this book, the experiences of the school systems of Lowell, Worcester, and Fall River, coupled with the experience of magnet schools and schools of choice systems elsewhere in the country, strongly suggest that the five-phase process described in the following pages can be used in any school system.

The first step is for the local school board and the central administration to develop a "plan for planning" that spells out the various stages of the planning process. This plan will show how and by whom each stage will be conducted. It will also specify the activities that must be completed during each stage, so that the school board and the central administration will have the information they need to determine whether or not to proceed. Such a "plan for planning" should include the following components:

Phase I: Develop Mechanisms for Initial Planning

- Create a parent/professional/community planning council
- Study the full range of desegregation options and methods of student and professional assignments
- Prepare and conduct parent/professional surveys

Phase II: Design a Citywide Controlled Choice System

- Develop a controlled admissions and transfer policy
- Develop a parent information system
- Develop an individual school planning process
- Develop the student and professional assignment system
- Develop a staged implementation plan, including cost analysis
- Develop data base and evaluation system

Phase III: Planning for Individual Schools of Choice

- Develop plan for existing school buildings
- Establish a plan for new citywide schools of choice

Phase IV: Planning for Implementation

- Inform parents about the new system
- Assign students
- Staff the schools of choice
- Solve the logistical challenges
- Develop the distinctive educational options of all schools

Phase V: First Year of Full Implementation

This process is outlined in the flow chart on the following page.

**FLOW CHART**

**Suggested Process for Planning Schools of Choice and System-Wide School Improvement**

*Pre-Planning Stages to Explore the Possibility of Choice*

*Study of Equity Issues and Student Assignment Possibilities*
*School Board, Superintendent, Parents, Teachers, Principals*
*(three Months)*

**Phase I**

**Mechanisms for Initial Planning**

*Creation of Parent/Professional/Community Council*
*Study of Range of Possible Educational Options and Methods*
*Prepare and Conduct Parent and Professional Surveys*

*(Six Months)*

**Phase II**

**Design a Citywide Controlled Choice System**

*Develop Controlled Admissions and Transfer Policy*
*Create Parent Information System*
*Develop Individual School Planning Process*
*Develop Student and Professsional Assignment System*
*Develop Staged Implementation Plan*
*Develop Database and Evaluation System*

*(Three to Six Months)*

***Phase III***

***Planning Individual Schools of Choice***

*Individual Schools of Choice*
*Citywide Schools of Choice*

*(Six Months)*

**Phase IV**

**Planning for Implementation**

*Inform Parents*
*Assign Students*
*Staff Schools*
*Solve Logistical Challenges*
*Develop Educational Options*

*(Three Months)*

**Phase V**

**First Year of Implementation**

Schools Open

As the planning for a controlled choice system moves ahead, every school system, whether it is immediately involved in desegregation or not, must be mindful of all questions of educational equity. In school systems that are either already desegregated or are in the process of desegregating through parent choice, the student assignment procedures must be spelled out in great detail and checked to make sure they conform to all civil rights and desegregation requirements. Even if no official order to desegregate exists, all of the civil rights statutes and guidelines still apply: every parent and student is entitled to a fair and equal opportunity to choose the schools they want, and no school in the district can be segregated by race, ethnic group, social class, gender, or special needs.

It is all too easy for a school system to slip -- either advertently or inadvertently -- into a situation where some schools are heavily white, while others are mainly African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American, or Native American. If this happens, the school district lays itself open not only to justifiable charges of de facto segregation but also to charges of unfair, inequitable, and undemocratic educational practices. Every school system implementing a choice system must have a carefully thought out controlled admissions and transfer policy in order to guarantee educational equity and full equality of educational opportunity for all students.

## Phase I: Mechanisms for Initial Planning

The first phase of the planning process may be the most important component of the entire process. If it is not conducted with great care, the rest of the planning will suffer. During this phase the planners lay the groundwork for building a constituency for choice; however, they may also discover that the community is not interested in choice. As the community considers the possibilities and problems involved in instituting diversity and choice, many people may become enthused about the idea or reject it out of hand. Thus the development of mechanisms for exploration, information gathering and information dissemination are crucial.

### Creation of the Citywide Parent/Professional/Community Council

Establishing a citywide parent/professional/community planning council is an excellent way to conduct information gathering and provoke public discussion. In Lowell and Worcester (MA), these councils are made up of two parent representatives (one voting representative and an alternate) from each of the city's schools. (See Appendix A for the Lowell Citywide Parent Council Bylaws.) In other cities, such as Fall River (MA), the council membership has been broadened to include nonparent members of the community. It might be a good idea to invite one or two taxpayers and/or interested community people. In some communities, teachers and principals have also been included on this council. It is probably a good idea to include, at the very least, a representative of the teachers union, preferably the union's current president, but the council should be composed primarily of parents.

The parent or parent/community council, assisted by the central administration and often with the aid of outside consultants, has three main tasks: (1) study other choice systems, (2) select the choices for the parent/staff surveys, and (3) disseminate information about the new controlled choice system.

### Study Other Systems of Choice

To find out what other cities and school systems have done to create a wide range of educational options, the parent planning council needs to investigate the different kinds of schools that have been established across the country. Ideally, teams of parents and teachers will visit as many schools as possible to see them in operation.

In Lowell, for instance, in 1981 teams consisting of members of the parent council, teachers, and central office administrators -- using funds provided through the federal Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) -- visited most of the major magnet school cities in the East and Midwest, including Buffalo, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Minneapolis. They found that a wide variety of magnet school organizations and curricula exist across the country, ranging from traditional to highly nontraditional school and classroom organizations, and from highly academic to very unusual curricula.

They returned impressed and enthusiastic about what they had seen and eager to have the same range of choices in Lowell. To help planning councils in their research on schools of choice (without having to travel), Books III and IV in this series describe the types of schools that might serve as possible choices. They feature ten different elementary and secondary schools of choice, ranging from traditional back-to-basics schools and continuous progress schools, to Montessori schools, open or developmental education schools, and micro-society schools.

The planning council and the school system planners, however, should not limit themselves simply to the range of choices that other systems have instituted. The parents, the teachers and principals in the school system should also do some thinking on their own, some exploring of what different kinds of schools they as parents and professionals might want, even if no one else in the country has as yet created those schools. In Lowell, for instance, when the parent/teacher teams returned from their research trips around the country, they decided to include in their list of possible options for Lowell two kinds of schools they had not seen on their travels -- a K-8 school for the fine and performing arts and a K-8 micro-society school.

### Select the Choices for the Parent/Staff Surveys

After conducting the investigations, the planning council may want to select five to ten different types of schools most appropriate for its school system. These choices should provide a range of approaches to schooling -- starting with a traditional, back-to-basics type of schooling, moving on to a continuous progress approach, and ending with a selection of developmental types of schooling. The council may also suggest alternate choices. These would be curricular specializations and could be offered as an additional attraction at any of the organizational types of schools. Examples of these specializations are science and technology, the fine and performing arts, foreign languages, two-way bilingual, and computers.

### Disseminate Information About the New Controlled Choice System

Now that council members are familiar with the range of educational possibilities and with the choices the council has selected for the surveys, they can and should explain these selections to other parents and teachers and to the community at large. The council thus becomes one of the main sources of information to help others understand diversity and choice. In addition to and working closely with

the parent/professional/community council, the school district staff will want to keep the local media, including newspapers, television, and the local access channels of cable systems, informed of its activities and plans. All meetings of the parent/professional council should be open to the public and to the media. Encourage media coverage of your plans for a choice system.

It is important to include the school system's professional staff -- all teachers and all principals in the system -- in the planning process. One possible vehicle might be a newsletter issued on a regular basis to keep staff informed. Also, the teachers and principals serving on the planning councils can meet with their colleagues to tell them about the choice system and the opportunities it presents. While the parental preferences must, in the long run, take precedence over professional preferences (it is, after all, the parents and their children who are the clients), a complementary desire on the part of the teachers and principals to practice the different kinds of schooling is crucial. Such involvement will prevent teachers and principals from feeling that they are being left out of the planning process. If the exploration into schools of choice is seen as serving only parents, professional backlash against the idea can result.

## Preparation and Conduct of the Parent/Professional Surveys

After the parent/professional council has studied the choices and decided on its initial suggestions for schools of choice, both the council and the system's planners should survey all the parents and professionals to ascertain their interests and to educate them about the new types of schools. The surveys have two key functions -- information and education. They are designed to gain information on the kinds of schools parents and professionals want and also to educate parents and professionals about the possible kinds of schools.

In many school systems, the idea of allowing parents to choose the kind of schooling their children will receive will at first appear to be a revolutionary change. When the Lowell and Worcester public schools first embarked on this planning process, not only parents but also teachers and principals began to take the matter seriously only when the council and the school administration conducted the first surveys. In the first Worcester survey all students in kindergarten through grade seven brought home forms for their parents' response. Since this was the first survey of its kind ever conducted in Worcester and since the idea of choice was brand new to most of the parents, the expected return was 10 percent.

The parent returns on the first survey were an impressive 38 percent; that is, returns were received from the parents of 38 percent of the kindergarten through grade seven students in the system. Roughly a year later, a second survey was conducted in a subdistrict, and the return rate was 50 percent. By the time a second subdistrict survey was conducted the following year, the return rate rose to 80 percent.

To the Worcester planners, the increasingly high rate of survey returns was clear evidence that the surveys themselves (along with favorable media publicity and the success of the system's first three magnet schools) were assisting parents not only in becoming more familiar and comfortable with the idea of choice, but also in becoming more sophisticated about how to make choices for their children.

So, too, teachers and principals may not be aware of the full range of schooling that they could be practicing. In the Massachusetts cities under discussion here, it quickly became apparent that most of the teachers had never been exposed to the wide range of legitimate and differing approaches to the education of children, nor had most of them had any on-site experience in anything other than traditional schools. So they, too, needed to become informed about and discuss the range of possible school options.

The basic parent survey model that was sent to every parent of children in grades kindergarten through grade seven in Worcester, Massachusetts, in January 1982 is found in Appendix B. The same survey items, modified slightly, could serve for professional staff. This survey example shows all of the basic elements of the model:

1. The parents' declarations of the kind of schooling they prefer for all of their children (or, in some cases, for each of their children), including both the type of schooling and the curricular option they want.

2. The parents' declarations of a willingness (or lack of same) to have their children bused to school outside of their neighborhood attendance area.

3. Background data on the parent and student racial/ethnic status, current school location, current grade level, etc.

The survey is a form of market research, since it identifies the degree of demand for each of the various educational options. It also provides information on the effective demand for each option by asking parents whether they would be willing to have their children transported in order to obtain their choice. "Effective" is used in the sense that these children are active candidates for schools of choice since their parents are willing to have them bused to a school of choice.

This type of survey is a forced choice strategy because parents are asked to respond to a limited number of clearly defined options and to rank order their preferences. Experience suggests that if an open-ended or "What kind of school would you like?" type of questionnaire is used, the result is almost always a long shopping list of desirable features that may or may not fit together into a coherent educational program and may or may not, when put together by the system's planners, end up being what the parents or professional staff had in mind.

In the field experiences thus far, the survey instrument has been used only with public school parents who might be affected by any proposed choice plan -- that is, all parents of public elementary school children, including kindergarten parents and parents of seventh graders. In none of the cases were survey forms given to parents of preschool children or parents with children in private or parochial schools. Under ideal circumstances, of course, these parents would be surveyed as well, but it is often difficult for public school systems to obtain access to them. In planning the survey, a school system might want to develop creative methods of outreach to the parents of all children in the community -- preschool

and school-age -- since this is the real market for the new schools choice. Some possible ways to do this are to distribute surveys to the parents of the children at local preschools or to print surveys in newspapers or distribute them in public places like libraries.

Experience in Massachusetts cities has shown that the highest response rate occurs if students take the survey home and bring it back. In the case of the parent surveys, all survey forms are returned to the students' schools and then forwarded to the central office for compilation and analysis. The professional survey is administered simultaneously with the parent survey and contains the same choices. When administered to the staff, this survey (in a form adapted for teachers and principals) serves as a resource inventory, because it describes the degree to which the school system's staff is interested in the same types of schooling as the parents.

Professional surveys will provide information on:

1. What kinds of organization and curriculum the teachers would like and whether the choices of the teachers and principals match the choices of the parents -- in other words, whether the existing teaching staff is interested in supplying the range of options parents want.

2. Whether teachers and principals would voluntarily transfer to a school adopting their preferred type of schooling.

3. Background data on those teachers and principals by racial/ethnic status, current school location, current teaching level, etc.

School professionals will also want to design and implement annual evaluation surveys to determine whether the schools of choice the parents want have been created and whether these schools are accomplishing their intended tasks. These surveys should be conducted at the end of each academic year and be built into the school system's overall evaluation process. They ask both parents and professional staff for their degree of satisfaction with the schools they have chosen and solicit suggestions for improvements in the educational programs and operating procedures of those schools.

Parent Survey Results

The compilation and analysis of all survey results will be greatly expedited through the use of data processing techniques and a simple computer spreadsheet program. A sample of the results of the Worcester survey are contained in Appendix B. Information that came out of this survey is:

l. The total number of parental responses, reported as one response for each child listed on a survey form (if a parent responds for four children, that is four responses), broken down into the following categories:

   -- minority and nonminority responses, according to U.S. Office of Civil Rights categories (black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, and other)

   -- public school, private, parochial, and preschool responses

-- responses from each individual public school.

This information gives the system planners an overall indication of how many parents are interested in choosing the kind of schooling their children will receive.

Planners also gain a ranking of the educational choices made by parents, ranging from most to least desired. School administration will then have a general idea of how many of each kind of school will be necessary to satisfy parent demand.

2. A breakdown of the total responses by choice of educational option (including first, second, and third choices) and by minority/nonminority, public school/private and parochial school and preschool categories.

3. A breakdown of the minority/nonminority parental choices by existing schools in the system.

   This gives the planners a list of the most popular parent options in each school. If a particular option is overwhelmingly favored by the parents of one school, that school becomes a logical candidate for conversion to that option. It also gives the planners a list of the options desired by a smaller number of parents throughout the city. These types of schools may be candidates for citywide schools.

4. The number and percentage of positive responses to the transportation question broken down by minority/nonminority, public school/private, parochial and preschool.

   This information gives the planners a rough idea of how many parents would allow their children to be transported in order to receive their first choice option as well as an idea of the balance of whites, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans in the schools.

## Some Surprising Outcomes of Parent Surveys

Parent/professional surveys provide data on what parents and teachers might like in a school of choice system. They also provide some suggestive (and obviously not conclusive) evidence concerning some of the major questions about introducing parent and professional choice in public school systems.

Although the parent and professional survey results are both useful and instructive, all such surveys and their results must be viewed with considerable caution. For instance, these surveys may not be statistically valid samples of the total parent or teacher population of their communities. They do not tell us much about that segment of the parent and professional populations who, for whatever reasons, chooses not to respond.

From the limited survey information obtained in Massachusetts by asking parents, teachers, and principals what they do want (and also drawing upon

information obtained from other schools of choice situations around the country), the following hypotheses seem to be true:

- Most parents do want to choose the kind of school their children will attend, whether that school is the neighborhood school or not. This corresponds to the results of a 1987 national Gallup poll in which 71 percent of public school parents wanted to be able choose the school their children will attend. The results of the Massachusetts surveys suggest that African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-American parents are at least as eager as white parents to choose the schools their children will attend. Indeed, the results suggest that these parents are probably more eager than white parents.

- Many parents are quite willing to have their children bused to a school that provides the kind of public schooling the parents want for their children. Again, this appears to be true to a greater degree for African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-American parents than for white parents. This result goes against the usual belief that most American parents want their children to attend their neighborhood school and are unwilling to have their children transported to school.

- While a traditional back-to-basics school had the largest parent response, various nontraditional schools received a majority of positive responses. Perhaps the most interesting case was Lowell, where the majority of parents chose the two unusual citywide schools -- the arts and city micro-society magnets.

- Minority parents are more likely than nonminority parents to choose nontraditional schools.

Further, the evidence of these surveys, as well as conversations with parents in Massachusetts cities, strongly suggests that many parents are quite willing (and some of them are positively eager) to have their children in racially, ethnically, and socially mixed schools if they can choose those schools and if they are assured that those schools are of the kind and quality they want.

II

# PHASE II: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CITY-WIDE PLAN

*"We now permit some choice among junior high and high schools within a single school district. Why not expand that, and permit much greater choice within the district and even across district lines?... The more public school choices we offer parents and students, the better are our arguments against destructive schemes like tuition tax credits and vouchers. Wider public school choice will very substantially negate the argument for giving money to parents to send their children to private schools... Surely a competition among public schools , where everyone competes under the same ground rules, is a lot healthier than a private versus public competition which is inherently unequal and unfair because the rules don't apply to all."* -- Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers, April 27, 1985, Niagara Falls, NY

After completing the survey process and analyzing the results, the system planners can begin Phase II: the development of the city-wide plan for controlled choice. To ensure that the new schools of choice are desegregated, the first step in developing a plan is to establish a set of rules for student admission and transfer.

## Develop Student Assignment Policy

The school system must develop -- and the local school board must adopt -- a controlled admissions and transfer policy to guarantee that all student assignments will conform to all the civil rights and desegregation requirements. This controlled admissions and transfer policy (and therefore the parent choice process) must conform to and accomplish the following goals:

- ensures that every school in the system meets the desegregation standards set down by the courts and the U.S. Office of Civil Rights. Each school must have a minority population of less than 50 percent and equal numbers of male or female students.
- ensures that there are firm minority/majority quotas for each school in the system, thereby providing a specific number of seats for African-American, Hispanic-American or Asian-American students and for white students.
- spells out the process by which parents make their choices. In most cases, parents are asked to make first, second and third choices, so that if the

quota for their race, ethnic group or gender in the first choice school is filled, their children are automatically given a place in their second or third choice school.

- describes precisely how students are placed in schools by parent choice. In some school systems, seats are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. That is, those parents who are the earliest to apply (or who are on a school's waiting list) are given first call on available seats. In other systems -- and especially in cases where extremely popular schools are oversubscribed -- seats are assigned by lottery. The names of all applicants are put into a pool. A computerized lottery is conducted and the winners get their first choice school. Lottery losers take their second or third choice schools.

- distinguishes between the different kinds of parent choices and makes clear the established arrangements for each kind of choice, including:

  -- the choices made by parents whose children are entering kindergarten. Since all kindergarten seats are available, the chances of any child getting the parents' first choice school are obviously much greater, whether the policy is first-come, first-served or a lottery.

  -- the choices made by parents with older children who have just moved into the school district or whose children have been attending private schools. These choices will clearly be constrained by the seats available.

  -- the choices made by parents with children already in the system but who wish to transfer a child from one school to another. Once again, these choices will be constrained by the seats available policy.

- states policy on the admission of siblings to schools of choice. Most such policies give preference to siblings of children already in a school.

- states whether children who live within walking distance of a particular school receive a preference in admission to that school.

- provides a fair and clearly understood appeals process so that parents who have been denied their first choice can petition for a review of the assignment decision. In some cases, such an appeals process is handled by a special appeals board. In other cases, the superintendent is empowered to make the final decision, or the appeal can be taken all the way to the local school board.

An example of such a controlled admissions and transfer policy, from the Cambridge Public Schools, is provided in Appendix C.

Provide for the Right Number and the Right Kind of Schools of Choice

After the survey results have been analyzed and digested, the central administrators and the local school board must determine which of the options listed by the parents and teachers have the support necessary for implementation.

Those in charge of planning and implementing the program must decide how many of each kind of school are needed to satisfy the demand. For instance, if the parents of 40 percent of the children in the system have asked for back-to-basics schools, then it can be extrapolated that roughly 40 percent of the seats in the school system should be assigned to that form of schooling. In addition, they must determine how many school buildings or parts of buildings will be devoted to each of the different types of schools requested by the parents and how they can be placed so that the majority of students can walk to them. The survey results will also provide the system's planners with a fairly accurate picture of the kinds of schools that can and should be created as citywide schools of choice. For instance, in the first Worcester survey, the developmental option received 424 first choice responses (with 179 saying "yes" to transportation), the Montessori option received 424 first choices (with 191 saying "yes" to transportation) and the micro-society option received 257 first choices (with 125 saying "yes" to transportation). These figures clearly suggest that these three kinds of schools had enough support among the parents to become citywide options.

Once the system planners have developed a general picture of the range and number of the choices and which ones will be citywide and which ones district or zoned options, the next task is to determine how the choices will be geographically distributed throughout the school system. If, for instance, that 40 percent figure for back-to-basics translates roughly into 10 schools, those 10 schools can be dispersed throughout the system so that many children can walk to them. Transportation costs will be kept down because fewer children will have to ride buses. The citywide schools, of course, need to be located as centrally as possible, so that children who are bused to them from all over the city will have as short a bus ride as possible. These schools, along with other types of schools, can be located in part of a building sharing a central location.

## Develop a Districtwide Plan for Schools of Choice

As schools of choice have developed in desegregating school systems over the past two decades, they have tended to fall into three basic types. In designing a desegregated school system based upon diversity and choice, educational planners need to think about which of these three structures they want, with full awareness of the virtues and drawbacks of each type. Here is a description of the three basic categories.

### Citywide Schools of Choice

These schools are established without geographic attendance zones and are therefore open to students from anywhere in the school district. For instance, all of Buffalo's 23 magnet schools were established either by closing existing neighborhood schools and then reopening them as citywide magnets or by building brand new schools and opening them as citywide magnets.

In almost all citywide schools of choice, the students are admitted according to percentages established for males and females, for white, ethnic, and African-American students and often on a first-come, first- served basis. No preference in admission is given to students who live near the schools, although the younger siblings of students who are in the school may be given preference in new admissions.

In most cases, citywide schools of choice are established because they offer an unusual kind of schooling that is desired by a sufficiently large number of students who are often scattered all over the school district. Montessori schools, micro-society schools, and schools for the fine and performing arts are good examples of types of schooling that are often set up as citywide schools. As an example, Lowell's two citywide schools (the arts and city magnets) show that citywide schools of choice not only can produce a high quality of schooling and offer unusual and truly diverse curricula, but also can be schools that are easily desegregated through the establishment and strict maintenance of quotas. Descriptions of both schools appear in Book IV. As the arts and city magnet schools clearly show, in newly created citywide schools of choice all students, parents, teachers, and the principal are volunteers who are there because they want to design and practice the particular kind of schooling being offered by the school. Thus citywide schools of choice are more likely to be fully desegregated and to have the shared sense of mission that is so important to the successful operation of any school of choice -- or any school, for that matter -- and thus important for the achievement of educational excellence.

One drawback to these citywide schools may be transportation. Since the students are scattered over a large area, it is likely to be expensive to bus them.

Zone Schools of Choice

In Fall River, the schools of choice were created by dividing the school district into subdistrict attendance areas or zones that encompass a number of elementary schools and perhaps one or two middle or junior high schools. Within each of the subdistricts, no school has its own attendance zone. Parents may choose any school in the subdistrict if seats are available and if any child's attendance at the chosen school will either improve or at least maintain the required racial, ethnic, and gender balance in all of the zone's schools. Transportation is provided within each zone, rather than citywide.

All such zones must, of course, be carefully drawn. Each zone must roughly replicate the minority/white mix of the school district as a whole, so that the burden of integration and the opportunities for choice will be shared as equally as possible.

Zone schools of choice have the great virtue of reducing the costs of transportation, but they can also, to some extent, reduce the range of options available to parents if the planners do not provide the full range of requested options in each zone. One possibility is to establish zones as well as some citywide schools.

Neighborhood Schools of Choice

A neighborhood school of choice retains its conventional geographic attendance zone. The children of parents who live in that school's attendance zone are given first preference. In some cases, parents are guaranteed that their children can attend the school. Students from outside the school's established attendance zone can choose the school only if there are seats not occupied by students from the school's regular attendance zone.

In Worcester, MA, the school authorities have adopted this approach in creating the 20 schools of choice (an ever-expanding number, since several existing

schools are converted into schools of choice each year). Existing schools can volunteer to become schools of choice, or, in the case of schools that are ethnically, racially, or sexually unbalanced, the central administration can encourage them to do so. Worcester conducted several parent surveys to determine the different kinds of schools parents wanted. Individual schools used the results of those surveys to determine their distinctive educational programs.

Such neighborhood schools of choice, however, have major drawbacks. The results may be schools that are still identified with the status of the neighborhood both in terms of desegregation and choice. They may not aid significantly in the desegregation of the schools. Since they give first preference to children from the school's neighborhood district, they often do not have many extra seats available for desegregation purposes.

Secondly, when the creation of the school's program is left largely to the people (and especially the professional staff) already in that school, the product will be a minor variation on whatever the school is presently offering. Thus, while neighborhood schools of choice are the easiest to create, they tend to provide the least degree of genuine diversity and choice for both parents and teachers and usually the smallest degree of genuine desegregation.

Here, too, one possibility is to have neighborhood schools of choice along with citywide schools of choice for those kinds of schools that parents are willing to have their children transported to.

Create Parent Information System

Introducing diversity and choice into a school system is a major change. Planning and implementing such a change requires a careful step-by-step process that will attempt to involve all elements of the educational community -- the parents, the teachers, the principals, the central administration, the school board, and the citizenry at large. It is unlikely that anyone in the school district is going to be fully aware of how a system of diversity and choice is going to work. In particular, they may not be aware of all the possible educational options. At this stage in the planning process it is important to establish an outreach and information system to inform the parents, the professional staff, and the community at large about the range of schooling that the parents and teachers have asked for in the surveys.

The first and absolutely essential task in any successful system of parent choice is the establishment of a permanent system to supply parents with the information they need to make wise choices for themselves and for their children. Although some parents have been a part of the planning process from the beginning, if choice is to be implemented successfully, a permanent and much more powerful system of parent involvement and parent information must be institutionalized.

As the schools of choice are being planned and put into operation, central and/or zone parent information centers can be created to distribute information to parents and to handle the registration of all students, including preschool and kindergarten students, and all requests for transfers from one school to another. Parent centers need to be established in each attendance area. If parents have district-wide choice, then the district needs at least one parent information

center. If the district has five zones of choice, then it will need more parent information centers. These centers, which are usually staffed by paid parents, are open all day every school day and as often as possible in the evenings. Parents can come to the center either for registration and/or transfer purposes or simply to learn more about their options.

Each center provides informational brochures in all appropriate languages describing the options parents have, the location of the schools, and clear descriptions of how parents can make choices. Each center will need bilingual personnel fluent in the languages spoken by the parents.

A student assignment officer at each center will have a computer terminal tied into the system's central computerized school system and student data base. This data base includes the complete records of all students as well as up-to-date information on the number and location of any and all available seats. If the system does not have the computer capability, the student assignment system can be handled on a paper basis; however, a computer system will certainly ease the assignment process. The student assignment officer has the power to make assignments on the spot, if the parent choice and seat availability match up. The design and operation of one of the oldest such centers, the Parent Information Center in Cambridge, is described in detail in Appendix E.

Guarantee Equal Access for all Students

In order to make sure that all students have equal access to all schools of choice, school systems need to make special efforts to see that all parents, whether speakers of another language, isolated, or lacking in knowledge about schools, receive all of the information they need in order to make informed choices. This means that all information prepared and distributed by the system (including the parent surveys) must be prepared and distributed in all appropriate languages and in language understandable to noneducators.

The information brochures on the choices available, again in all languages, can be widely distributed to churches, minority community organizations, and even supermarkets and any and all other places frequented by parents. Bilingual personnel at the parent information centers can make parents feel comfortable and help them to understand the choices available and the rules and regulations guaranteeing their children equity and equal access. In addition to making the information centers a place where all parents feel comfortable, choice systems such as the one in Cambridge also employ parent liaisons or outreach workers who go to homes, churches, community centers, and community social service agencies to meet and assist parents.

# III

## PHASE III: PLANNING INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS OF CHOICE

*"There is nothing more basic to education and its ability to bring our children into the twenty-first century than choice. Given a choice in public education, we believe parents will play a stronger role in our schools. Innovative new programs will spring to life. Parents and the whole community will become more deeply involved in helping all children learn. Teachers will be more challenged than ever. And, most important, our students will see immediate results."* --Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education, National Governors' Association, August 1986

With the local school board's approval, the system planners are now ready to proceed with Phase III, planning the individual schools of choice. In an ideal world the planners would work with a clean slate: all the schools would close for at least a full academic year and would not reopen until each school had an assigned option, all teachers had been reassigned according to their choice, and all parents had chosen the school they wanted for their children.

In the real world, however, such opportunities are unlikely. Therefore, the planners will be faced with two necessary sets of decisions. The first is to make sure that all of the different types of schools requested by parents and the professional staff are actually created; that they are created in numbers to satisfy the parental demand; and that they are distributed throughout the school district based on the demographics of parent demand, the requirements of desegregation, and the need to keep transportation costs to a minimum. The second set of decisions concerns the attendance procedures for each school -- whether all schools will be citywide schools of choice or whether some will be citywide, some zoned, and some neighborhood.

In this process it is extremely important to recall one of the most important of Fliegel's Laws, the set of planning practices laid down by Seymour Fliegel, the former deputy superintendent of Community School District Four in East Harlem. This law is "a school is not a building," meaning that it is possible for a single large school building to contain as many as four different kinds of schools. And, indeed, that is precisely what Community School District Four has done. A single building in the district may have a different school on each of its four floors. The building that once was Benjamin Franklin High School, for example, is now the Manhattan Center for Science and Math and contains five schools running from preschool through high school.

Another of Fliegel's Laws states that schools should be small -- no larger than 400 to 500 students -- to make sure that no student gets lost in the bureaucratic labyrinth of a big school. This can be accomplished by subdividing a larger building into smaller units. Most of the schools of choice in District Four started out as small schools with perhaps only one grade level. They grew gradually by adding a grade each year.

The planning process described below draws on the best practices developed in the Massachusetts cities and in Community School District Four. It is one that is most likely to produce the greatest degree of parent and professional satisfaction and the greatest degree of choice, desegregation, and educational excellence. It is based on the Schools of Choice/School Improvement Planning Form designed by the Institute for Responsive Education and used in Fall River and other Massachusetts cities. (See Appendix D for a sample that could be used by other districts.)

## The Systemwide Planning Process

Both the overall planning process and the implementation process should be guided by a central administration planning unit specifically set up to insure that each school fits into the carefully designed systemwide plan. The first job of this planning unit -- using the survey data as the basis for its decisions -- is to determine how many schools housing each option will be required to meet the parent/teacher demand. If, for instance, forty percent of the parents have asked for "back to basics" or fundamental schools (as was the case in the first Worcester survey) then forty percent of the seats in the system should be devoted to this option. The planning unit must then determine how many actual schools this percentage requires and then must assign that option to particular buildings (or, using the District Four model, to parts of buildings) in such a way that those schools are evenly distributed throughout the district so that as many students as possible can walk to school.

The planning unit must also then determine which options, because of the smaller number of parents choosing them (such as Montessori or developmental), should be citywide schools and where such schools can be located. A second job of the central planning unit is to develop guidelines for the planning process and then to monitor it as it unfolds. The sections below should aid this team in their work. To provide further technical assistance for implementation of schools of choice, the team might also contact their regional desegregation assistance center or state department of education desegregation staff. The central planning unit will want to hold regular meetings with the heads of all school planning teams. Meetings can also be held for planning teams of schools that are similiar to each other -- for example, all of the back-to-basics schools -- so that the staffs can share ideas and promising practices.

## Planning by Individual School Planning Teams

After the systemwide plan has been adopted and it has been determined which schools are to house which options, the central planning unit must establish individual school planning teams for each school. The surveys will provide data needed to form the planning teams. For instance, the planning teams for each of the back-to-basics schools, are composed of volunteers drawn from the principals, teachers, and parents who named that educational option as their first choice. For elementary schools the team should include a principal, three to five teachers (all of whom will be recompensed as per contract for work beyond school hours), six parents, and any other school or community people the team feels would be useful. For middle and high schools the team should include a principal, five to ten teachers, ten parents, and five prospective student representatives. All members, including school staff and parents, should be paid for their service on the team since most of the planning work will have to be done in after-school, evenings and summer planning sessions. Each planning team will need an explanation of the planning process and a Schools of Choice/School Improving Planning Form that spells out the major questions that the planning team must answer as it designs its new school. Both of these documents should be provided in the languages spoken in the community.

The explanatory document developed by the central planning unit will spell out the goals of the planning process. These are:

- to insure that the administrative staff, the teaching staff, and the parent body of each school have a shared sense of mission and a clear understanding of and agreement upon the distinctive programs their school is planning to offer, and that they know the steps necessary to conduct and complete the schools of choice/school improvement planning process;

- to insure that all segments of the school community, and especially parents, are fully and adequately involved in the process;

- to insure that each school's planning process is complete, i.e., that each school has considered all of the necessary elements involved in planning the distinctive programs of their schools of choice;

- to insure that each individual school has followed each step of the planning process carefully and thoroughly;

- to enable each school to develop an evaluation process that is based on more than the results of standardized achievement test in the conventional basic skills and academic areas.

The explanatory document will also deal with the following topics:

- what the systemwide plan is, what it is trying to accomplish, how it will work, and what it offers to both parents and teachers;

- what is the range of different educational programs within the district;

- how the planning process in each individual school will be conducted;

- what elements -- including a proposal for funding -- must be in each school's final plan;

- how additional people will be chosen to serve on a school planning team, if needed;

- what the timetable for the completion of the planning team's work is.

The planning team is the group charged with developing a school plan for review by the central planning unit. The central planning unit provides consultant assistance to each planning team. If the central planning unit finds that any school's plan is inadequate or unfinished, it has the option of returning the plan to the school planning team for further work.

Development of an Individual School Plan

The school's planning team will develop a plan based on that school's response to the questions listed in the Schools of Choice Planning Forms. Each individual school plan will contain several basic elements.

1. Educational Philosophy:

The school's educational philosophy, how this particular school proposes to serve that philosophy, what its distinctive approach to education will be, and how the school intends to improve the education offered to its parents and students. These goals should also include the school's program objectives in terms of attracting parents and students and how it proposes to meet the overall system goal of desegregation.

2. Distinctive Program or Programs:

The team must describe the school's distinctive program, the subjects and the time for each, the expected outcomes in the basic skills of language arts and mathematics and in all other subjects. To aid the staff in learning new skills and subject areas, the plan should provide for continuing staff and program development. The role that parents will play and how they will be made aware of program development on an ongoing basis is a vital part of this process.

3. School Organization:

The team should describe how the school will be organized and operated so that the school can best carry out its shared sense of mission. This should flow clearly from the school's educational philosophy. For example, the school's organization can be highly structured, flexible, or student-oriented. The description of the school's organization should cover the following points:

- Governance structure: How major decisions will be made; who will be involved in making them, including the role of both teachers and parents.
- Grade structure and method of grouping: How the school will organize itself in terms of grade levels -- age-graded (all six-year-olds in first grade classes, etc.), flexible grouping (by achievement levels in reading and math, for instance) or vertical, mixed-age grouping (including bilingual classes, special needs, Chapter I).
- Scheduling: How the scheduling of classes will work within all established state guidelines.
- The integration of African-American, Hispanic-American, Native-American, Asian-American and female students: To ensure integration, especially in science, math, vocational education, and physical education, the team needs to spell out the specific ways in which students of various races, ethnic groups, and genders will be integrated into all classes, programs, and activities.
- Reporting to parents: What kinds of changes and/or additions, if any, the team proposes to make to the standard systemwide reporting of progress; whether there will be regular parent conferences and open houses; what steps will be taken to make sure that all parents, including parents who do not speak English or have limited literacy, are aware of how their children's progress is being measured and reported.

- Behavior/discipline guidelines: How the school expects to discipline both student and staff behavior.

- Parent involvement structure: How the school proposes to involve parents in its decision-making process and the operations of the school, including the role of PTA, with special emphasis on how all parents will be reached and involved, especially parents of students who are limited in English proficiency.

- Evaluation plan: How the school's distinctive educational program will be evaluated. This evaluation plan should contain the goals and objectives for each component of the school's program. The school will specify the evaluation methods, such as reading tests, test of multicultural understanding, attendance records, discipline referrals, and/or climate studies, that will be used to measure the success of the proposed program in achieving the stated goals.

  The evaluation plan should include some measure of the students' thinking skills. For example, a development school might use the ability to think for oneself as an evaluation criterion, and a school with a truly classical curriculum might have a working knowledge of Latin, Greek and Plato's Republic as its goals. Spelling out a broad set of goals and objectives is important in order to develop more sophisticated ways of measuring a school's success than those commonly used now.

4. Proposed Use of the School's Facilities: The team will outline the use of the school's assigned facilities and any needed alterations or additions.

5. Descriptive Brochure: Each planning team will prepare a description of its school that is succinct and readable. This will be used to inform parents and other staff about the school's educational offerings.

6. Implementation Plan: How the school's plan will be implemented, including an implementation schedule; what additional staffing and other resources the school will need in order to get under way; and the source of the funding for such implementation.

After planning teams have spent about one full calendar year (including two summers) developing their individual school plans and after these plans have been approved by the central planning unit, the central administration and the local school board must both formulate and approve the final citywide plan that will be the basis for the first year of implementation, including a clear description of the costs of the plan and how those costs will be met. If court or state ordered integration is involved, such a plan would most likely have to be approved by whatever authority has ordered the system to desegregate.

# IV

# PHASES IV AND V: IMPLEMENTATION

After the final plan for schools of choice has been approved, the local school board and the central administration will begin to implement the plan. This involves informing the community of the new plan, staffing the schools, determining student assignments, and solving a number of logistical problems.

## Inform Parents and Professional Staff

The first step in successfully implementing a plan for schools of choice is to distribute information about the plan to parents, school staff, and other members of the community. This can be done by distributing informational booklets throughout the community and by arranging for media coverage of the plan. The school system should do everything it can to let the public know about the new school plan. In doing this, it should cover the following points:

- the reasons for devising the plan: systemwide school improvement and educational excellence through parent and professional choice, desegregation, the empowerment of parents and professionals to choose;
- the way the plan was developed: through the active participation of parents, teachers, principals, students, and other members of the community;
- the range of educational options and choices available to parents and professional staff;
- the process of assigning students: the location of the parent information center(s), other avenues of getting information such as open houses and parent liaisons in schools;
- the proposed means of financing the plan and the creation of new schools;
- the way parents can make decisions about the schools they want their children to attend;
- the system by which teachers and principals can make their choice of school assignment.

An informational booklet is a vital part of the campaign to acquaint parents and others with the schools of choice program. This booklet, describing the educational programs that will be offered and the location of each program, must be prepared and distributed in all appropriate languages. It will also explain to parents why they would want to enroll their children in any particular program. Preparing the booklet is the responsibility of the school system's central administration. Remember that each planning team has already prepared a brochure describing the programs offered by individual schools. These brochures

can be included in the informational booklet as well as being used for continued recruitment.

The informational booklet should be distributed to all parents in the school system, as well as to parents of children in preschool, private school, and parochial school. The booklet can be sent home with school children, and copies should be displayed prominently in all the schools as well as at parent information centers. The booklet is also distributed to all members of the school system's professional staff (and especially to all teachers), so that they will be fully informed when it is time to apply for teaching positions.

One section of the booklet contains a form, asking parents to indicate their choices for their children for the opening of school the following September. Parents are asked to identify their first three choices for each of their children. They are also asked to supply pertinent data about the children's ages, racial/ethnic category, present school, and so on.

School staff should encourage all parents to visit the parent information centers and any/all of the schools of choice. Schedule public information meetings throughout the district. A school system might want to take advantage of the public access channel on cable television. Informational programs might be scheduled as well as a call-in program. If parents want more information or have difficulty making choices, a telephone hotline is a good idea.

In addition to distributing the informational booklet, complete descriptions of the schools and the philosophy behind schools of choice can be published in local newspapers, preferably in pull-out supplements. The program should also be described in as many other media (TV, radio, local magazines) as possible. A true media blitz should occur.

Staff the Schools of Choice

During this same time period, the teachers and principals will be making their choices of the kinds of schooling they wish to practice and, therefore, of the schools they will be teaching in. The principals and teachers who volunteered to be members of the individual school planning teams will have first choice of positions in those schools. The assigned principal, the volunteer teachers, and the parents on the planning team of each of the schools of choice can act as a staff selection team to review the teacher applications and select the staff for the school. As teachers are selected by the team, they can volunteer to join the staff selection committee, if they choose. It is hoped that all such assignments can be made primarily on the basis of the teacher's choices and his or her suitability for the program, rather than on seniority or administrative order. Since teacher contracts often prohibit involuntary transfers, the central administration will need to work out an agreement with the union on how this rearrangement of school staff will occur.

Schedule the staff assignment process so that it can be completed by the end of the school year. Then the staffs of the new schools can spend the summer in curriculum and staff development activities.

Assign Students

As the parental choices begin to come in, the planning unit has the staggering job of sorting out the parental choices and matching them with the options requested, the spaces available in schools, and, most especially, with all of the requirements of the controlled admissions and transfer policy so as to continue or improve racial, ethnic and gender integration. It would be extremely useful if this information can be entered and sorted by computer.

It is a good idea to assign students before the end of the school year. Then, during the summer months school personnel can respond to any parent appeals. Experience suggests, however, that there will be few such appeals. Most parents who fail to get their first choice assignments are relatively satisfied with their second choice.

Solve the Logistical Challenges

Solving the major logistical problems that arise from instituting a change as massive as controlled choice will be a large task for the central planners and the school staff. These problems range from relatively simple ones, such as making sure that the schools have the materials and supplies they need to begin to implement their special programs, to much more difficult ones, such as providing appropriate equipment and facilities. An arts school, a science and technology school, or a micro-society school may require specialized facilities and equipment that are expensive and complex to install.

The student transportation system will be especially challenging. The difficulty of the transportation task will depend largely upon the school system's current amount of transportation. In systems where most students walk to neighborhood schools, the implementation of choice can require a large increase in the amount of busing. In other systems, where large numbers of children are already being bused for a variety of reasons (bilingual education, distance, special needs, safety, or whatever), the busing required for choice may not actually be much of an increase.

Transportation systems for choice must not be considered as simply an add-on to existing transportation systems. Rather, school systems have to start from scratch, take into account all busing needs, and design a totally new transportation system. The best approach is to rely on computer programs designed specifically for this purpose. If this means of developing the transportation system is not inaugurated, the costs of transportation can render diversity and choice prohibitively expensive.

School administrators may want to look into creative solutions. For example, one way to decrease the burden and expense of busing is to have all children walk to their nearest school. Students who are going to another school will then be picked up by buses and transported to their school of choice. Another possibility especially appropriate to a zoned system is a circuit system in which buses make a continuing circuit of all schools. In the morning students are picked up at their nearest school by a bus that takes the shortest route to their school of choice. The process is reversed in the afternoon. One virtue of this system is that if a child misses the bus he or she should be on, the student simply waits for the next bus to come along. All buses travel to all schools.

## Phase V: First Year of Full Implementation

After the students have been assigned to schools and the staff selected, the newly assigned principal, staff, and parents of each school of choice can spend the summer months beginning the translation of the planning team's design for the school into the appropriate organizational and classroom activities. The phrase "beginning the translation of the planning team's design" has been carefully and deliberately chosen. No one can expect that a full-fledged school of choice to spring from the foreheads of the system's planners or from a new staff on the day of the school's official opening.

It will be easiest to establish the more conventional schools of choice, such as traditional back-to-basics schools and perhaps continuous progress schools, since it is likely that these already exist in some form in the system. But even these schools need time to establish a collegial staff, to provide staff development, to put into practice their new curriculum and school organization, to establish a disciplinary code, to develop governance and parent involvement structures, and, in general, to develop a shared sense of mission.

Although the widely practiced forms of schooling are familiar to many, however, it will take a year or two before all members of the school community -- the staff, the parents, and the students -- become completely comfortable with the school program. If the school also has a curricular specialty, such as the arts or science and technology, then the development process will take longer. Some kinds of schools -- such as Montessori, developmental, or micro-society -- will take even longer to develop fully, probably from three to six years.

In the case of Montessori schools, which require specially trained and certified teachers, some school systems may not start whole schools, but rather begin with the lowest grade or grades (three to five-year-olds in the case of Montessori) and then add a grade a year until the school is complete. This approach, although it takes longer to implement, does guarantee that the school system will be able to deliver promises it has made.

Indeed, while implementing a program for schools of choice it is important that parents and staff remember that development takes time. They should not expect all schools to be in their final form on the first day of implementation. Time and practice will lead to further refinement and development of the program. Staff training will need to be ongoing.

# V

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

*"Schools have always been diverse, of course, in the sense that some have been better and some not so good, and certain parents have always found ways to get their children into the schools of their choice. Our commitment in Massachusetts, however, has been to make schools different in focus but equal in quality and to give all parents the opportunity and the information to make significant choices for their children. . . .*

*"The programs. . . permit several hundred urban schools to develop their distinctive approaches to educational excellence have been a true school reform movement in which the leadership has come -- as it should -- largely from the school level. In this process the role of central administration has been to orchestrate diversity, to assure that the common educational goals of the school system are met, even if in many different ways, and that no student is neglected in the process."*
-- Rhoda Schneider, Acting Commissioner, Massachusetts State Department of Education, May 5, 1986.

The introduction of diversity and choice into any school system -- large, small, urban, or suburban -- constitutes a major change. For most school systems it most likely represents a completely new direction. Educational diversity and parent/professional choice represent a restructured public school system, one that operates by principles quite different from those followed for the past 50 years or so. Such a new kind of system requires an organizational and managerial structure different from the one currently found in most public school systems.

The most immediate problem for any school system that begins to move in the direction of diversity and choice revolves around the crucial question of who decides on the educational options or choices and the role of the central administration in this process. Both historically and presently, these decisions have been made by the central administration and the local school board. Most of our larger public school systems have an office of curriculum and instruction, usually headed by an associate or assistant superintendent whose job is to prescribe and then oversee the development of the subject matter. And in many cases, this central unit prescribes not only the order and sequence of what will be taught but also the way in which that subject matter will be presented to students. This prescribed curriculum is most often spelled out in curriculum guides prepared by subject matter specialists, often in consultation with committees of teachers.

Under this organizational structure, the principals and teachers in the schools have little say either about what or how teaching will occur. Some teachers -- and even some schools -- will exercise what Seymour Fliegel calls "creative disobedience" and will carefully place the curriculum guides in a basement closet while they pursue their own vision. Parents and students, however, have no opportunity to exercise such disobedience, creative or otherwise.

Because the introduction of controlled choice radically changes the traditional school system, school administrations set up the special planning units mentioned in the previous chapter. While it appears to be the most rapid and efficient way to get such planning done, these special units all too often operate independently of the central administration and especially from the people normally in charge of curricular matters. In some cases, this has occurred because the curriculum and instruction people are uncomfortable with the idea of a diversity of approaches to schooling (and therefore the abandonment of a single standardized curriculum). In other cases, administrative convenience -- to put the responsibility for desegregation planning in a single and separate office -- has been the motivation.

For whatever reasons, this practice inevitably creates problems. The principals and teachers in the schools of choice, for instance, will not be sure who they should look to for decisions. By habit they expect the authority for curricular changes to come from the curriculum and instruction people. Yet here is a new group of upstarts who appear to have the authority to make such decisions. Thus, the people in the schools will get conflicting messages. The curriculum and instruction people, wary of departing too far from the standard ways, will counsel the school people not to make radical changes, while those in charge of the schools of choice planning will urge principals and teachers to create dramatically different kinds of schooling.

This all-too-prevalent problem illustrates the fact that the successful introduction of genuine diversity and choice requires restructuring public school systems.

The curriculum experts have a new role in which they become an "office or department of school development" and assist those teams of parents, teachers, and principals to develop the wide range of different kinds of schools they want. This office of school development (working under the general rules and directions laid down by the superintendent and the school board) still retains the authority to determine the general parameters of educational legitimacy. A team of parents, teachers, and principals proposing to establish a Muammar el-Qaddafi School of International Terrorism will be politely told by the office of school development that such a school is not really a wise or legitimate approach to public schooling in this particular school system or, for that matter, anywhere in this country.

In this sense, then, the job of creating diversity and choice is not handed over to a specialized and separate schools-of-choice planning unit but is conducted as the most important task of the central administrative apparatus itself. The office of school development will need to be staffed with people who are trained for and skilled at the job of working with individual school planning teams, assisting them to develop the educational philosophies, the unique curricula, and the most suitable forms of school organization, governance, and evaluation as dictated by the wishes of the parents and professionals on the planning teams. Another element, then, of the restructured central administration is to train its members in school-based management and collaborative decision-making.

### Administrative Role in the Empowerment of Parents and Professionals

The first of these major changes is the decision to give parents, principals, and teachers at the school building level the power to determine the range of educational philosophies, curricula, and school organizations that will constitute the revised school system. The use of parent professional surveys and the empowerment of teams of principals, teachers, and parents (or simply teams of teachers) to design and initiate the schools automatically changes the role of central administration and, in particular, the traditional role of the office or department of curriculum and instruction.

Instead of deciding all matters of curriculum and instruction at school system headquarters, the curriculum and instruction people now find themselves charged with the task, in Rhoda Schneider's lovely phrase, of "orchestrating diversity."

## The New Organization of the School System

The empowerment of parents, teachers, and professionals to determine the educational philosophy, curriculum, and school organization inevitably means that these distinctive schools of choice must now have the power to control -- within definite limits set down by the central administration, the school board, and union contracts -- the funds allocated for the operation of their school and the staffing of that school. Thus the concept of systemwide administrative decentralization and school-based management and budgeting are instituted. In most cases where such a management system has been installed, the school board allocates to each school in the system a lump sum budget based upon the number of students enrolled in that school (with special allocations for Chapter I, bilingual, and special needs students).

In the most advanced instances of such cases (as in Rochester, NY and now in Chicago, IL), each school is governed by a council made up of elected parent and teacher representatives and the school's principal (and sometimes community representatives). This council decides how the school's allotted budget will be spent. The council also acts as a screening and staff selection committee to guarantee that all teachers in the school understand and share the school's mission.

## A New Approach to Student and Teacher Assignments

Genuine educational diversity; real choice on the part of parents, students, teachers, and principals; and school-based management and decision-making by people in individual schools of choice combined with the necessity to assure equity and guaranteed access for all students clearly require a different approach to the ways in which students and teachers are assigned to schools. In the old days when every neighborhood school had its own geographic attendance zone, admission to the school depended solely upon where a student happened to live. Teachers were assigned to a particular school when and wherever a teaching position happened to become vacant, or made choices based on neighborhood, or status of the school. No more. Under diversity and choice, local geography no longer controls where any student can go to school. Teachers can now select the school according to its educational approach, but they must apply for vacant positions and be selected or rejected by that school.

These alterations add up to a totally new system of student and staff assignments and a radically increased demand for public information about every school in the system. Thus the need for well-staffed parent information and student assignment centers scattered throughout a school district, for informational booklets on school choices sent to every home, and for drastically revised union contracts guaranteeing choice for teachers.

## Restructured Schools

In order to meet all of these challenges and opportunities, the superintendent and the local school board need to think long and hard about how they propose to restructure their school system to make genuine diversity and choice possible and to implement diversity and choice successfully. While it may be difficult -- indeed, close to impossible -- to reorganize any school system overnight, a major part of the planning for a change of this magnitude should include a study of the school system's present organizational structure When planning for such a revamped dministrative structure, everyone in the central administration should be involved in both planning and executing any and all changes, so that no part

of the central system is left out. The principals and teachers should know exactly what they are supposed to be doing and to whom they are responsible -- or no longer responsible.

Finally, it is also important for everyone concerned in the planning and execution of a school system based upon diversity and choice -- the local school board, the central system administrators, the principals and teachers, the parents, and the citizenry at large -- to understand that diversity and choice in and of themselves are not going to solve all of the school system's problems. While this new way of conducting public schooling may well constitute an enormous advance in terms of parent, professional, and student satisfaction and performance, choice will not immediately solve any longstanding problems of inadequate funding for a district's public schools, the provision of adequate salaries for teachers, the need for talented teachers, or the adequacy of the district's school facilities. In-so-far as a system of diversity and choice greatly increases public (and therefore taxpayer) satisfaction with the public schools, studies have shown that such a new system will make a significant contribution towards solving many of these other problems as well. But it will not suddenly make public education everything it can and should be.

The experience with diversity and choice so far suggests that diversity and choice do provide public education with a much better framework for the future within which its staff can begin to move more sensibly and effectively to solve many of its other problems.

APPENDICES:

A. Lowell Citywide Parent Council Bylaws

B. Worcester Public Schools Parent Survey and Survey Results

C. Cambridge Controlled Admissions and Transfer Policy

D. Fall River Schools of Choice/School Improvement Planning Form

E. Description of Design and Operation of Cambridge Parent Information Center

F. Sources of Further Information and Assistance

# Appendix A

## LOWELL CITYWIDE PARENT COUNCIL BY-LAWS

## CITYWIDE PARENT COUNCIL BY-LAWS

### PREAMBLE

In order that the parents of school children in the Lowell Public Schools may have a means of communication and dialogue with the School Administration and the Lowell School Committee, a parent participation organization called the Citywide Parent Council is hereby organized.

The purpose of this organization is to:

1. Involve parents in addressing and responding to issues in the Lowell Public Schools pertaining to educational standards, equity, minority isolation and other education-related issues.

2. Provide an open forum for discussions regarding school issues and voted policies.

3. Provide a mechanism for parent representation.

4. Give its members the responsibility of keeping their respective schools informed.

TICLE I. Name:

The name of this organization shall be the Citywide Parent Council (CPC).

ARTICLE II. Goals:

The goals of the Citywide Parent Council will include, but not be limited to, the following:

A. Create and maintain a means of communication among parents, teachers, administrators, and the Lowell School Committee;

B. Promote an environment of understanding and common purpose so that the best education may be offered to all children.

RTICLE III. Officers:

A. Chairperson and Chairperson-Elect:

The Chair shall conduct the monthly meetings and convene meetings of the CPC Executive Board. It is the responsibility of the Chair to appoint a Nominating Committee at the CPC February meeting, whose duty will be to formulate a slate of officers for the May elections.

The Chair-Elect shall conduct monthly meetings of the CPC in the Chair's absence. Upon election, it is understood that upon the expiration of the Chair's term of office, the Chair-Elect will succeed the Chair for a term of one (1) year, or until the original chairperson's term of office is completed. The Chair-Elect will act in an "Apprentice" Chair capacity for as long as he or she holds the "Chair-Elect" office. The Chair-Elect is a member of the CPC Executive Board.

B. Nominations for Chairperson-Elect shall be made by a Nominating Committee appointed by the Chairperson at the February Meeting. A slate of officers will be presented to the Chairperson at the May meeting; however, nominations will be solicited from the floor, in addition to the candidates repsented on the slate.

C. A Recording Secretary shall be elected each May. The duties of this office will be to record and disseminate the minutes of each CPC meeting. He or she is a member of the CPC Executive Board.

D. A Treasurer shall be elected each May. The duties of this office will be to ensure that any monies received into the CPC Treasury are spent and accounted for in a

fiscally responsible manner. The Treasurer will report monthly on fiscal affairs of the CPC and will be a member of the Executive Board.

E. A Public Relations Officer will be elected in May. His or her responsibilities include communicating to the media regarding CPC activities and school policy development issues. The Public Relations Officer will also establish a communications system among members, such as a telephone tree, to apprise members of scheduled meetings or emergency meetings convened by the Chair. The Public Relations Officer will be a member of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE IV. Voting Policy

A. Each school in the Lowell Public School System, with the exception of Lowell High School and designated Master PACs (Parent Advisory Councils) shall designate two voting members. If only one member from a school attends a meeting, that school or designated master PAC shall have only one (1) vote.

Lowell High School will be entitled to eight (8) voting representatives.

B. Ad hoc representation: In the absence of appointed voting members from a school, the Chair can call for representation from the floor from each unrepresented school. Members representing a school must have a child presently attending that school.

C. The CPC shall make decisions by majority votes cast.

D. Each parent may only vote for one school at each meeting.

ARTICLE V. Membership:

A. Every parent with a child attending a school in the Lowell Public School System is automatically a member of the Citywide Parent Council.

ARTICLE VI. Meetings:

Meetings shall be held on the third Monday of each month, ten (10) times during the school year. If that Monday is a holiday, then the meeting will automatically be scheduled for the following Monday.

A. All meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

B. All meetings shall be held at a site to be determined by the CPC at the September Citywide Parent Council meeting each year.

C. Meetings shall start at 7:30 p.m., and not extend past 9:30 p.m.

D. The agenda for each monthly meeting shall be determined by the Chair, with the assistance of the Executive Board, at least seven calendar days prior to a scheduled CPC meeting.

E. Any CPC member may propose an item for the agenda by contacting any member of CPC Executive Board, at least ten (10) days prior to the next scheduled CPC meeting.

F. A meeting is automatically cancelled if school is cancelled due to weather. For any other cancellation, members shall be contacted by telephone.

G. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the Chairperson. Notification of the membership shall be given as early as possible.

H. All meetings of the CPC are open to the general public.

ARTICLE VII. Subcommittees:

A. The responsibilities of a subcommittee are the following: to investigate, research, and make recommendations to CPC membership.

B. All reports and recommendations of the CPC subcommittees shall be submitted for approval by the CPC, before becoming official CPC recommendations to be presented to the Superintendent and to the School Committee of Lowell Public Schools.

C. A subcommittee may be authorized by the CPC on any viable issue by either the Chairperson or by majority vote of the CPC membership. A chairperson of such a subcommittee must be appointed by the CPC Chairperson.

D. Subcommittees who have completed their work may be disbanded by the Chairperson of the CPC.

ARTICLE VIII. Amendments:

A. Amendments may be proposed by any CPC member.

B. An amendment proposed by a CPC member must be submitted in writing, at least twenty (20) days prior to a regularly scheduled CPC meeting. Said amendment is to be forwarded for review by the designated voting membership, with the notice of and the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting.

C. Any amendment proposed by the Chair or Chair-Elect shall also be included with the notice of and the agenda for the next regularly scheduled CPC meeting.

D. The By-Laws and any subsequent amendment(s) shall take effect upon their passage by a majority of those voting at the CPC meeting.

# Appendix B

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENT SURVEY
AND SURVEY RESULTS

A MESSAGE TO ALL K-7 PARENTS OF THE WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FROM: THE CITYWIDE PARENT PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dear Fellow Parents and Guardians:

The Worcester Public Schools is planning to set up several "Magnet" elementary schools as part of a three year plan to reduce minority isolation and to give parents a choice of the kind of schooling they want for their children.

"Magnet" schools are schools that:

- offer a particular kind of schooling (such as "back to basics" or "continuous progress"), or offer a special curriculum (such as the arts or science and technology).
- teach all of the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic but do it in special and different ways.
- attract volunteer students from outside their local district.
- have strong involvement of parents.

We are not asking you to sign your child up for any particular school. We need to know the different kinds of schools and programs YOU would like to have for your children. Please read the following pages and follow directions on each page. Have your child take the completed forms back to his/her teacher.

If you have any questions or need help, call your school principal or the Parent Information Center, Sharon Afutu/Lillian Perez 799-3543.

John E. Durkin
Superintendent of Schools

Robert Knott, Co-chairperson
Citywide Parent Planning Advisory Council

Marie Piergallini, Co-chairperson
Citywide Parent Planning Advisory Council

Gail Aframe, Chairperson
Survey Sub-committee

Christine Johnson, Chairperson
Magnet School Sub-committee

"In accordance with Federal and State Laws including, but not limiting it to Title IX and Chapter 622, the Worcester Public School System is committed to all persons who are entitled to attend public schools, work and advance on the basis of merit and ability regardless of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin or handicap."

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR MAGNET SCHOOLS

Please read the following descriptions of special programs or courses of study that the magnet school could offer. Write the number "1" in the box next to the kind of program you would most like your child to attend. Write the number "2" in the box next to the program that would be your second choice, the number "3" next to your third choice, the number "4" next to your fourth choice and "5" next to your least favorite choice. If you want different programs for each of your children, you may fill out a form for each child.

☐ The Science and Technology Program - emphasizes the methods of scientific inquiry, experimentation and reasoning. The curriculum would include special projects in such disciplines as biology, botony, astronomy, physics, mathematics and such modern technology as computers and data processing equipment.

☐ The Physical Health and Environmental Program - emphasizes the health sciences and the effect that society and the environment have on each other. Students will work on projects which combine the physical and the social sciences and learn how the interaction can have both positive and negative effects on the way we live.

☐ The Fine, Applied and Performing Arts Program - will provide students with an opportunity to develop their artistic skills both as artists and as observers of the arts. The traditional language arts skills of reading and writing will be incorporated into the study and practice of acting, painting, music, sculpture, dance and other arts activities selected by parents for their children.

☐ Gifted and Talented Program - provides students with the opportunity to develop their special talents and do advanced work in both academic subjects and in practical areas such as carpentry, computers, electricity and mechanical skills.

☐ The Multi-Cultural Program - would provide students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds with the opportunity to learn the languages and learn about the different cultures that make up the modern world.

## EDUCATIONAL "OPTIONS" OR "TYPES" OF SCHOOLS

Please read the following descriptions of different kinds of schools. Write the number "1" in the box next to the kind of school you would most like your child to attend. Write the number "2" in the box next to the school that would be your second choice, the number "3" next to your third choice, the number "4" next to your fourth choice and "5" next to your least favorite choice. If you want different schools for each of your children, you may fill out a form for each child.

☐ The Continuous Progress Option - encourages students to progress through a carefully defined curriculum at their own best rate of speed. A child will be able to advance as fast as possible in each subject area and may be working at different grade levels in different subjects. The curriculum will stress language arts and mathematics.

☐ The Developmental Option - emphasizes the intellectual, social, physical and emotional development of your child. As students participate in activities which help them learn about objects, ideas, other children and adults, they will learn how to teach themselves and work independently in specially designed learning centers.

☐ The Fundamental Option - concentrates on teaching students the basic skills of reading, writing, arithmetic and responsibility. The school emphasizes discipline and order. Parents and teachers work together to guarantee that the school has high academic standards and that all students are working at grade level or above.

☐ The Montessori Option - provides an educational environment that fits each stage of a student's intellectual and physical development. Students select their work with guidance from their teacher and use special, self-correcting learning materials to develop skill in language, mathematics, practical-life and sensorial activities. The curriculum is based on the idea that children are naturally curious, want to learn and like to work on things which interest them.

☐ The Microsociety Option - provides a program designed to help students learn how society works. Students will not only learn about all aspects of the city in which they live, but will set up and run their own society in school, including banks, business corporations, a system of government, a newspaper and publishing house, an art gallery and a theatre company. Students will learn that the basic skills are useful and can be used to run their in-school society as well as the world outside school.

In order to complete this survey, we need you to provide the following information:

1. In order to have your child attend the kind of magnet school you want, would you be willing to have your child go to school outside his/her neighborhood district, with FREE transportation provided?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

2. If a magnet school had an all day kindergarten, would you be more likely to send your child to a magnet school?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. What race or ethnic group does your child/children belong to? Please check the correct box.

   ☐ Black ☐ American Indian
   ☐ Hispanic ☐ Oriental/Asian
   ☐ White/Non Hispanic ☐ Other/Specify

4. We would like the following information, but you are not required to supply it if you do not wish to:

   Grade (preschool - grade 7). Please list the grade.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Name of Parent or Guardian (optional):

   _____

   Address:_____

   _____

   Telephone:_____

Please have your child return these forms to his/her teacher.

WORCESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Sara J. Robertson, Chairperson
Mark J. Andrews
John F. Doherty
Konstantina B. Lukes
Philip J. Niddrie
Jane D. O'Brien
Edmund J. Tierney

March 10, 1982

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MAGNET SCHOOL SURVEY
SUMMARY SHEET

Total Responses 5,234 out of 14,311 = 37% return

Total Majority 4,393 or 84% of responses

Total Minority 841 or 16% of responses

Ranking of 1st choices of kinds of schools:

| | | % of total | % of total Maj. | % of total Min. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Fundamental = 2,111 | 40% | 43% | 27% |
| 2. | Continuous Progress = 1,790 | 34% | 35% | 29% |
| 3. | Developmental = 425 | 8% | 8% | 11% |
| 4. | Montessori = 424 | 8% | 8% | 9% |
| 5. | Micro-society = 257 | 5% | 5% | 6% |

Ranking of combined 1st and 2nd choices of kinds of schools:

1. Continuous Progress
2. Fundamental
3. Developmental
4. Montessori
5. Micro-society

Ranking of 1st choices, kinds of Educational Programs (Themes):

| | | % of total | % of total Maj. | % of total Min. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Science and Technology | 30% | 30% | 27% |
| 2. | Gifted and Talented | 29% | 32% | 18% |
| 3. | Fine Arts | 16% | 16% | 17% |
| 4. | Physical Health | 12% | 11% | 13% |
| 5. | Multi-Cultural | 4% | 3% | 6% |

Ranking of combined 1st and 2nd choices, kinds of Educational Programs (Themes):

1. Talented and Gifted
2. Science and Technology
3. Fine Arts
4. Physical Health
5. Multi-Cultural

Transportation

| | % of total | % of total Maj. | % of total Min. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total "Yes" to transporting children to 1st choice = 1,821 or | 35% | 31% | 52% |
| Total "Maybe" willing to transport - 1,515 or | 30% | | |
| Total "Yes" and "Maybe" = 3,336 or | 64% | | |

All -day Kindergarten for Magnet Schools:

| | % of total | % of total Maj. | % of total Min. |
|---|---|---|---|
| In favor = 1,775 or | 40% | 29% | 60% |

Combined Summary of
"Yes" to transportation by First Choice of Kinds of Schools

| | Total | Majority | Minority |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Continuous Progress | 610 | 481 | 129 |
| 2. Fundamental | 521 | 423 | 98 |
| 3. Developmental | 179 | 149 | 30 |
| 4. Montessori | 191 | 148 | 34 |
| 5. Micro-Society | 125 | 104 | 21 |

Combined Summary of
"Yes" to transportation by First Choice of Educational Program

| | Total | Majority | Minority |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Science and Technology | 459 | 386 | 111 |
| 2. Gifted and Talented | 502 | 437 | 65 |
| 3. Fine Arts | 322 | 249 | 63 |
| 4. Physical Health | 213 | 170 | 43 |
| 5. Multi-Cultural | 92 | 63 | 29 |

Combined Summary of
"Yes" to transportation by First Choice of Kind of School and Educational Program

| | Science/Tech. | Phys. Health | Fine Arts | Gifted | Multi-Cult. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Continuous | 134 | 50 | 90 | 181 | 26 | Majority |
| | 50 | 24 | 24 | 22 | 9 | Minority |
| Developmental | 29 | 32 | 37 | 40 | 11 | Majority |
| | 8 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 2 | Minority |
| Fundamental | 152 | 59 | 66 | 134 | 12 | Majority |
| | 38 | 5 | 20 | 25 | 10 | Minority |
| Montessori | 25 | 16 | 33 | 62 | 12 | Majority |
| | 11 | 5 | 14 | 10 | 3 | Minority |
| Microsociety | 46 | 13 | 23 | 20 | 2 | Majority |
| | 4 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | Minority |

# Appendix C

## CAMBRIDGE CONTROLLED ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER POLICY

## VII. THE ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

### 1. THE LONG RANGE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

This policy is designed to provide maximum choice for parents in selecting the schools their children will attend, within the constraints imposed by the available space, the requirements of racial balance and the special needs of the children. It provides stability of assignment for children and, at the same time, a mechanism for adjusting the racial balance of the schools, as needed, without unnecessary movement of students. It gives a priority in assignment to current residents of the city over later arrivals.

#### 1.1 Early registration and assignment:

There will be two major registration periods for parents of pre-school children. They will be encouraged to register their children in the fall of the year prior to the year the children are expected to enter kindergarten. At the end of the registration period, assignments will be made, with parents being given a period of time to indicate that they will accept the assignment.

The procedures for making the assignments will be those detailed in section 1.2 of this plan.

In the spring of each year, there will be a second registration period, following the same procedures. At that time, parents whose children received assignments the previous fall will be asked to reconfirm their intention of having their children attend the Cambridge public schools in the fall. This will eliminate holding space for children from families whose plans have changed, and will facilitate the spring assignments.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all potential parents know about the early registration and the procedures involved. There will be announcements in the press and other media; notices through the schools to parents who may have younger children; announcements to all pre-schools and day care centers and to community centers and organizations. The Parent Information Center, Public Library, and all relevant staff will have the

information parents will need. They will be encouraged to visit the schools that might interest them prior to registration, in order to make informed choices as to their preferences.

A specific timetable for kindergarten registration will be found in the Appendix.

1.2 Long range assignment policy:

Students currently in the public schools: The school to which a student is assigned as of September, 1981, will become his/her "home school," with the exceptions listed below. Every effort will be made to allow the student to remain in the home school until graduation. Each such student is guaranteed that he/she will not be moved for desegregation purposes for at least four years.

New and transferring students: Students newly entering the school system, those whose parents' request for transfer has been approved and those subject to reassignment as defined in the sections below will all be assigned to the "nearest appropriate school." All such assignments will be made by the Central Assignment Officer in the Office of Desegregation. Once the assignment is made, that school will become the student's home school.

1.3 Criteria for Assignment: The criteria for assigning students will be defined as follows:

Parental Preference: At the time of registration, or at the time a transfer is requested, a parent may indicate three or more preferences, in order of importance to the parent. These may include a particular school, a magnet school or program, a parent's desire that the child attend the nearest possible school and/or that siblings be assigned together.

EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO ACCOMODATE THE PARENTS' PREFERENCES, WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED IN THIS POLICY.

If it is not possible, for any reason, to grant one of the parent's first three choices, and the parent has reason to be dissatisfied with the child's assignment, that parent may file an appeal

under the provisions of section 1.7:"Hardship Appeals."

Space Available: Space available in a particular school, program or grade will be defined according to the policy then in effect as to class size and school capacity, so long as it does not disrupt existing classes.

Special Needs of the Student: Any student requiring a bilingual program will be assigned to such a program, regardless of other provisions of this policy.

Any student requiring a special education program will be assigned according to the Core Evaluation process, regardless of other provisions of this policy.

A student who has completed a bilingual program and a student, once classified as 502.4, who is reclassified at 502.3 will each be allowed to complete one additional "transition year" in the same school, after which the student will be subject to reassignment under the assignment policy. The exception will be that any student who completes his/her transition year in the seventh grade will be allowed to complete the eighth grade without transfer.

Once it becomes possible to establish sites for both special education and bilingual students in more schools throughout the system, so the students are not isolated in a few schools, the provisions for transfer may no longer be necessary.

Racial balance: Transfers and new assignments, except as noted above, must meet the requirements of racial balance. The goal is to achieve a minority/non-minority percentage within each school, program and grade that reflects, within a few percentage points above or below, the minority/non-minority percentages of the school system as a whole.

Accordingly, minority students only will have the right of assignment to a school,program or grade having a minority population below 30%. Non-minority students only will have the right of assignemnt to a school,program or grade having

a minority population above 50%.

Minority and non-minority students may both apply to schools, programs and grades that are racially balanced.

In the event that there are more applications to a racially balanced school, program or grade than can be accomodated in the available space, priority will be determined as follows:

> If the minority population is 5% or more above the citywide average, priority will be given to non-minority students; if it is 5% or more below the citywide average, priority will go to minority students.

Sibling Preference: Of two students otherwise equally eligible for a single space, the one whose parents have indicated a sibling preference, if any, will get the priority.

Place of Residence: The final criterion to be considered, all other priorities being equal, the student living nearest the school requested will have a priority.

Lottery: In the event that, after considering all priorities, there are still more students eligible for particular choices than there are spaces available in that school or program, the Office of Desegregation will conduct a lottery of those in the relevant category or categories (i.e., minority third-graders, or non-minority fifth graders, or whatever other category might apply), in order to fill the available space. Other applicants, to the extent possible, will be granted their other choices.

Waiting list: A parent whose child cannot, for any reason, be assigned to the school or program of his/her first choice may have the child's name placed on a waiting list for the first suitable vacancy. Pupils on the waiting list will have priority, in case of an available vacancy, over new entrants to the school system.

Magnet Schools and Programs: Applications for magnet schools and programs must meet the same criteria as other applications. The application procedure is the same. The parent may indicate

the desired magnet as a preference. A committee representative of all the magnets will work with the Office of Desegregation to ensure that magnet admissions meet the special requirements of each of the magnet schools and programs, as well as the general policy.

1.4 Dissemination of Information:

Data as to the space available and the racial balance of the schools and programs will be compiled and published in October and March of each year.

Information about the assignment policy and about the various schools and programs for which parents may apply will be circulated as widely as possible, on a regular basis. In addition to announcements in the press and other media, parents may seek assistance at the Parent Information Center, at the schools and the public libraries. Information will be provided in English, French, Spanish, Greek, Portuguese and Chinese.

1.5 Certification of Address:

All entering students, and current students upon request, must submit a properly documented Certification of Address form to the Central Assignment Officer. A copy of a lease or mortgage, and/or the notarized signature of the landlord or manager of the property will constitute documentation. The Central Assignment Officer will be responsible for verifying addresses as necessary.

1.6 Transfers:

Once a student has attended a school, a parent who is dissatisfied with the assignment may request a transfer.

Except in the case of students needing bilingual or special education programs, NO TRANSFER WILL BE MADE THAT VIOLATES RACIAL BALANCE OR TO A SCHOOL OR PROGRAM IN WHICH THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT SPACE.

A parent whose request for transfer is denied may file a hardship appeal under section 1.7.

If assignment to a particular school clearly creates

an undue medical hardship for a student, and an assignment to a different school would lessen the hardship, a parent may apply for a transfer for medical reasons. Such a request must be accompanied by a statement from the child's physician and a statement from an official of the Cambridge School Department. Such cases may be investigated by the Office of Desegregation and reviewed by a School Department physician.

Students who move from one address to another within the city of Cambridge will not be required to tranfer to another school. However, the parent of such a student may request a transfer, and the student will be reassigned under the provisions of this long range assignment policy.

Under special and rare circumstances, transfers may be made by the School Department when proof of the necessity can be provided by a parent, school official or other relevant professional (e.g., social worker, probation officer, etc.). Such cases will be reviewed by the Office of Desegregation, and the transfer can be made only if the need is clearly substantiated.

1.7 Hardship Appeals:

A parent whose child has not been assigned to one of the first three preferences and who is dissatisfied with the assignment received; and one whose request for transfer has been denied may file a hardship appeal, as follows:

Step One: Parent fills out a Hardship Appeal form, submitting it, along with all related information and documentation, to the Office of Desegregation.

The Office of Desegregation will make a finding of fact, after any necessary investigation, including consultation with the parent(s) and other knowledgeable and relevant individuals. The findings, all information and the recommendation of the Office of Desegregation will be forwarded, within five working days,to the Hardship Appeals Board. A copy of the findings and recommendation will also be sent to the parent making the appeal.

Step Two: The Hardship Appeals Board will review each case referred to it. Using the criteria of safety and extraordinary educational need, the Board will recommend approval or disapproval of the request, in writing, giving the reasons for the recommendation.

Step Three: The Superintendent, the Chairperson of the Hardship Appeals Board and a representative of the Office of Desegregation will review each case. Unless there are compelling reasons against such action, the recommendation of the Board will be implemented.

An example of a compelling reason would be documented and substantial reason to doubt the facts as presented.

In any case, the final decision, along with the recommendations at the Board and Superintendent's level will be conveyed to the parent, in writing, by the Office of Desegregation.

Every effort will be made to expedite the work of the Hardship Appeals Board, so that final decisions can be made within two weeks of the Board's receipt of the appeal, or prior to the opening of school in the case of appeals received during the summer.

Proceedings of the Appeals Board will be recorded by a secretary, and all records will be maintained accurately. They will be available for review by members of the School Committee and authorized representatives of the State Department of Education. Records shall not be made public, but public disclosure may be made of statistics relating to hardship appeals, provided always that the identity of appellants is protected.

Composition of the Hardship Appeals Board:

Central Office Administrator (Chairperson)
Bureau of Pupil Services representative
Teacher (designated by the C.T.A.)
Two parents: one minority, one non-minority, recruited by the Office of Desegregation
Resident of Cambridge, representing religious, human or social services

# Appendix D

## FALL RIVER SCHOOLS OF CHOICE/SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING FORM

INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIVE EDUCATION
605 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, Mass.
02215

# SCHOOLS OF CHOICE/SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING FORM

## NO. I

To Assist Principal/Teacher/Parent Teams in Existing Elementary Schools That Are Initiating A School of Choice/School Improvement Planning Process

School District: _____

School:_____

Principal:_____

School Address:_____

Telephone:_____

| Present Minority/Non-Minority Ratio | Desired Ratio |
|---|---|
| _____% Minority | _____% Minority |
| _____% Non-Minority | _____% Non-Minority |

(If insufficient space is provided on form, please attach complete responses separately)

I. What would we like our school to be like five years from now? What will be its distinctive quality, its special attractiveness that will make other parents want to send their children to this school and will make other teachers and principals want to come to work here? What is our definition of educational "excellence"?

A. Educational Philosophy:

(what we think public schooling is or should be about, what we want the educational goals of this school to be, what kind of school do we wish to become, how we think children can best be taught)

B. Curriculum:

(what we think this school should teach and children should learn and whether we think we should specialize in a particular area of the curriculum)

C. School Organization:

(How should our school be organized in order to implement the educational philosophy and curriculum described above? This would include grade structure, classroom organization (age-graded, self-contained classrooms or continuous progress in language arts and math, for instance), what should the school's schedule be, and so on)

D. Testing and Reporting to Parents

(how should the educational progress of children be assessed, what kinds of tests should be used, how often should they be administered, how often and what kinds of report cards should be sent to parents, etc.)

E. Behavior/Discipline Code

(what should the school's discipline code be, how should it be administered, etc.?)

F. Governance

(What should the governance structure of the school be? What roles should the principal, teachers, parents and students have in making the important decisions about how the school will function? What kinds of control should the school have over its budget, the staffing of the school, etc.?)

G. Parent/Community Involvement

(How should parents and other community people be involved in the life of the school and in the educational program?)

H. Evaluation

(How do we wish the school and its educational program to be evaluated and how should that evaluation be conducted? What dimensions should be used and what dimensions should <u>not</u> be used?)

II. What do we propose to do to ensure that the poor and minority children in our school have equal educational opportunity, that they have equal access to all programs and resources and that they do not, for instance, end up re-segregated in lower level classes or tracks?

III. In order to implement the educational program described above, how do we see our present school facility being used five years from now?

A. Present Use of Facility

1. Number of full-sized classroom spaces contained in building_____

2. Auxiliary Spaces (check if in existence)

Auditorium_____

Library____

Gym_____

Cafeteria____

Combination of above____

Principal's Office_____

Teachers Room_____

Parents Room____

Other (specify)_____

3. Full-Sized Classroom Spaces Now Being Used for Specialized Purposes or Programs

Library____

Art____

Music____

Science Lab_____

Computer Lab_____

Industrial Arts_____

Homemaking/Domestic Science_____

Other (specify)_____

4. Present Use of Classroom Spaces

1. Mainstream Classes (number of each) — Average Class Size

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-Kindergarten | _____ | _____ |
| Kindergarten | _____ | _____ |
| First Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Second Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Third Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Fourth Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Fifth Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Sixth Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Seventh Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Eighth Grade | _____ | _____ |

2. Non-Mainstream Classes

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bilingual | _____ | _____ |
| Special Needs | _____ | _____ |
| Handicapped | _____ | _____ |
| Hearing Impaired | ____ | _____ |

Total Present School Population_____

Mainstream average class size_____

B. Proposed Use of Facility Five Years From Now

| 1. Mainstream Classes (number of each) | | Maximum Class Size |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-Kindergarten | _____ | _____ |
| Kindergarten | _____ | _____ |
| First Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Second Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Third Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Fourth Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Fifth Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Sixth Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Seventh Grade | _____ | _____ |
| Eighth Grade | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Non-Mainstream Classes | | |
| Bilingual | _____ | _____ |
| Special Needs | _____ | _____ |
| Handicapped | _____ | _____ |
| Hearing Impaired | ____ | _____ |

Full-Sized Classroom Spaces To Be Used for Specialized Purposes or Programs

Library___

Art____

Music____

Science Lab_____

Computer Lab_____

Industrial Arts_____

Homemaking/Domestic Science_____

Other (specify)_____

Total Proposed Maximum School Enrollment_____

IV. In order to implement the educational program described above, what will we need in the way of additional staff and resources over the next five years?

A. Additional Full-Time Staff

---

---

---

---

B. Additional Part-Time Staff

---

---

---

---

C. Curriculum and Staff Development Workshops

1. Workshops During School Year

No. of Workshops_____

How often_____

No. of Staff Involved_____

2. Workshops During Summer

No. of Workshops_____

No. of Staff Involved_____

D. Technical Assistance
(consultants)

1. During School Year

2. During Summer Workshops

C. Equipment
(Describe)

E. Materials and Supplies
(describe in general)

F. Auxiliary Services
(field trips, etc.)

G. Staff Travel

V. In order to have the kind of school we want five years from now, what additional resources do we need during the coming school year and what would they cost?

| A. Additional Full-Time Staff | Cost |
|---|---|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

B. Additional Part-Time Staff

| | |
|---|---|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

C. Fringe Benefits for above _____

D. Curriculum and Staff Development Workshops

1. Workshops During School Year

   No. of Workshops_____

   How often_____

   No. of Staff Involved_____

2. Workshops During Summer

   No. of Workshops_____

   No. of Staff Involved_____

   Cost_____

E. Technical Assistance
(number of consultants, daily rate)

Cost_____

F. Equipment
(Describe)

Cost_____

G. Materials and Supplies
(describe in general)

Cost _____

H. Auxiliary Services
(field trips, etc.)

Cost _____

I. Staff Travel

Cost_____

Total Cost of Needed Additional Resources _____

# Appendix E

## DESCRIPTION OF DESIGN AND OPERATION OF CAMBRIDGE PARENT INFORMATION CENTER

# At a Glance: Cambridge's Parent Information Center

**Program Background**
Under the Cambridge public schools system's "controlled choice" policy, the city has essentially abolished individual school attendance areas. Instead, parents can choose three schools that they would like their children to attend and list them in rank order of preference. The system attempts to honor first choices, provided that (a) space is available, and (b) that the aggregate impact is to achieve racial balance, which under the Cambridge plan means that no school falls five percentage points above or below the racial proportions of the total pupil population.

With such an approach, it is essential to provide all parents with access to information on all 13 elementary schools in the system including those that may be far from their neighborhood. To address this concern, Cambridge centralizes most of its parent information operation at the Parent Information Center at the Robert F. Kennedy School in East Cambridge. The program is now in its sixth year.

**Goals**
The Center strives to make sure all parents have access to information about Cambridge's public elementary schools, and equal access to apply to those schools.

**Staff**
Peter Colleary, staff assignment officer, is responsible for assignments and the overall operation. Margaret Gallagher, citywide parent coordinator, and Center coordinator, supervises parent liaisons, plans the outreach campaign for registration, and often is asked to speak to other school districts about the program. Both staff members work full-time throughout the school year and are assisted at the Center by a full-time secretary.

Liaisons act as "branches" of the Center and are employed at each of the city's 13 elementary schools. They work 20 hours a week out throughout the school year. Together they help the Center register from 1,500-2,000 children a year.

**Organization**
The Center aims to make a potentially confusing, and for some parents, an intimidating process, clear and friendly.

Toward this end, it has developed a neighborhood focus — through the liaisons — to provide local channels for information, because parents will usually go to their neighborhood school first for answers. The liaisons tell them to contact the Center, and will arrange for school tours and class visits.

Parents are welcome at the Center on a walk-in basis. These parents are presented with the diverse kinds of schools in Cambridge, and have several resources to take home for further study, including a 64-page booklet explaining Cambridge services and profiling each school, a map of the city of Cambridge and its schools, and a copy of the city's desegregation plan, *Desegregating the Schools: A Civic Responsibility*, implemented in all Cambridge schools in 1981-82.

The Center staff will ask parents relevant questions to help them focus on what their priorities are, i.e., what is most important to you — a neighborhood school, or teaching style? They will also open up the map and show parents where each school is located.

Once parents make a choice, they fill out an application. Later the applications will be entered into the school system's computer to check on space availability and to make sure the system's racial balance is maintained.

**Office**

A comfortable working space and place to talk with parents has evolved as an important part of the Center's approach to working with parents. The Center, which began as most programs do, as words on a piece of paper and telephone number, first acquired an "office" in a cubicle in the school department's Central Administration Building. The Center later moved to a spacious classroom at the Robert F. Kennedy School in East Cambridge. "We realized," says Gallagher, "we needed to make the office more accommodating for parents because their first impression is very important. Because it was our first year, it was extremely important to have everything in place and attractive." Later this year, PIC will move to Harrington School with individual offices to eliminate the distractions inherent in a large, open room and give parents more privacy to talk about school choices. The new office is also more accessible to public transportation.

**Training**

Liaisons are required to take extensive training, including how to take applications so they can pitch in during peak registration time (in December when the Center kicks off registration). New liaisons spend their first week at the Center observing how to take applications, taking notes, and then processing application on their own under supervision.

Beginning in December, there is more training for peak registration (as many as 390 parents have registered in 10 days). In two or three sessions, liaisons work in large groups filling out dummy application forms and role playing.

**Outreach**

The Center works hard to carry through an early and vigorous outreach campaign to ensure a successful registration. The Center markets its schools beginning in October, when flyers are mailed announcing an informational meeting in November and registration in December. The mailing list is derived from names the liaisons have garnered from school records that indicate every family who has an child of an age eligible to enter kindergarten. Each flyer is followed up with a phone call from the liaison. At the same time, there is a large mailing to Head Start parents who will be having a child entering the school system the next year. These are also followed up; Gallagher visits each Head Start Center when they have their regular weekly parent meetings and discusses school programs with parents. Advertisements are also taken out in newspapers.

Two informational parent nights, one at the Center, and the other in the north end of the city at another school, are held in

November. Each school prepares a kindergarten display and a teacher is available to anwer questions. Every department is represented — bilingual, special education, nursing, health. A slide presentation, prepared and presented by the city's primary education coordinator, describes what life is like in kindergarten.

In December, Gallagher and a team of liaisons kick off registration by spending two weeks traveling to each school, with ten morning and ten evening registration sessions. Parents are checked in and checked out; if a parent has indicated their child is dominant in a language other than English, Gallagher will arrange an appointment for them at the Center to have their child's language skills evaluated. Completed registrations are processed at the Center by Colleary who makes assignments. Parents are notified of their assignment within 30 days of registration.

The early registration — most schools don't worry until February, and private school until March — works well for Cambridge, says Gallagher, because it gives the public schools an edge over its competitors, the private schools. "Public education really needs to do marketing — you need to convince the general public you have something to offer, you have to market its assets," she says.

**Image**

The Center tries to provide a personal and friendly approach to all parents. "We tell them we have many things to offer, it may look complicated, but it's not," says Gallagher. "Here you're not treated as a number, you are treated with respect and dignity. We listen to parent's concerns, their concerns are taken seriously."

**Funding**

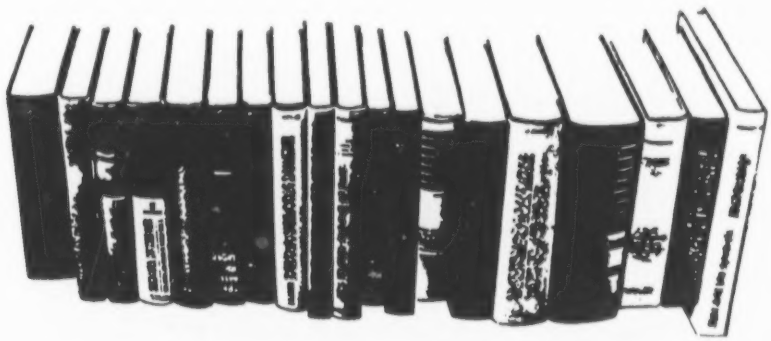
The Center receives funds under state Chapter 636.

**Strengths, Barriers**

One of the Center's assets is having all the information under one roof, says Colleary, and having only one person in charge of assignments. This avoids the potential for confusion and frustration that can occur when there are many people in scattered offices giving out information.

A large transient population prevents the Center from reaching all parents it would like to reach. The Center also cannot reach those parents who do not yet have children in the school system, and have not, for whatever reason, enrolled their child in a pre-school program.

*For more information, contact: Margaret Gallagher, Parent Information Center, Robert F. Kennedy School, 158 Spring Street, Cambridge, MA, 02141. (617) 498-9250. After Sept. 1 the address will be: Charles G. Harrington School, 850 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA, 02141.*



# Appendix F

## SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

New England Center for Equity Assistance
The NETWORK, Inc.
290 South Main Street
Andover, MA 01810
(508) 470-1080

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309

Dr. Charles L. Glenn
Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity
Massachusetts State Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 770-7530

Henry Mroz, Superintendent of Schools
George Tsapatsaris, Magnet School Project Director
Lowell Public Schools
85 Appleton Street
Lowell, MA 08152

John E. Durkin, Superintendent of Schools
Roland E. Charpentier, Magnet School Coordinator
Worcester Public Schools
20 Irving Street
Worcester, MA 01609

John E. Correiro, Superintendent of Schools
James A. Wallace, Chapter 636 Coordinator
Wilfred Houle, Parent Coordinator
Fall River Public Schools
417 Rock Street
Fall River, MA 02720

Dr. Mary Lou McGrath, Superintendent of Schools
Peter Colleary, Student Assignment Officer
Margaret Gallagher, Director, Parent Information Center
Cambridge Public Schools
155 Thorndike Street
Cambridge, MA 02140

Dr. Mary Anne Raywid
Director, Center for the Study of Educational Alternatives
Hofstra University
Hempsted, NY 11550

Joe Nathan
Senior Fellow
Hubert Humphrey Center
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN

John D. Klenk
Special Assistant to the Secretary for Choice
U.S. Department of Education
Room 4019
400 Maryland Avenue
Washington, DC 20020

Ms. Jane Armstrong, Senior Policy Analyst
Ms. Rona Wilensky
Education Commission of the States
Suite 300
1860 Lincoln Street
Denver, CO 80295

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PLANNING FOR SCHOOLS OF CHOICE: ACHIEVING EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

A four book series on intradistrict controlled choice. The three other books cover the following topics:

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This book defines controlled choice and its key elements. It shows how controlled choice can lead to the empowerment of parents, teachers and principals to improve schools, and foster both desegregation and greater educational achievement. It features a description of some of the pitfalls of a choice system that will help school leaders to establish these new school structures in an effective and successful way.

Book III. Model Schools: Traditional Structure

In its description of a number of traditionally organized choice schools (k-8) that are highly successful, the book describes model schools in the Northeastern United States that stress academic and traditional learning and one school with a curricular specialization in science and math. A practitioner's checklist is provided to help school personnel identify the key elements in a traditional school structure. The books also look into how high schools structures can be revised to fit into a choice system.

Book IV. Model Schools: Nontraditional Structure

This description of nontraditional schools of choice features schools that are organized around such nontraditional methods as the Montessori method, continuous progress, and also schools that feature unusual curricular specialties, such as a micro-society school. Here, too, a practitioner's checklist is provided to help school personnel identify the key elements in a nontraditional school structure. This book also looks at new methods of shared governance practiced by some of these schools.

Each book is $10.00; a complete set of 4 books is $30.00.

You may order them from:

PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT
The NETWORK, Inc.
290 South Main Street
Andover, Massachusetts 01810

New England Center for Equity Assistance
290 South Main Street
Andover, Massachusetts 01810
800-225-7931 (toll free number)
800-322-1030 (Massachusetts only)
508-470-1080